



USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

# GAIN Report

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## Thailand

### Livestock and Products

## USDA Seeks to Ease Beef Product Recall

2004

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**Report Highlights:**

USDA officials met with Royal Thai Government (RTG) Ministry of Public Health (MOPH) Food and Drug Administration (FDA) officials in Bangkok to review the scientific information and robust actions taken by the U.S. in the aftermath of the announcement of a BSE positive cow in the United States.

The meeting was in response to Thailand's comprehensive recall of U.S. beef from restaurants and supermarkets, irrespective of the date of importation or type of product.

Thai officials received the updated technical information and promised to review it with the next meeting of the FDA Food Committee that oversees issues including food recalls.

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Includes PSD Changes: No  
Includes Trade Matrix: No  
Unscheduled Report  
Bangkok [TH1]  
[TH]

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service Senior Technical Advisor, Patrick Clerkin, met with Thai FDA Secretary General, Dr. Supachai Kunaratanapruk, and his staff to present detailed scientific and technical information about U.S. beef and the U.S. beef processing industry in an effort to soften the 100 percent recall order issued by Thai FDA at the end of December 2003. Thai FDA officials had issued the general recall order following the announcement by USDA of a positive finding of BSE in one animal in the United States.

USDA officials presented information that would allow the Thai FDA to modify its recall to include only specified risk materials (SRMs) rather than applying a complete, non-discriminatory recall on all beef products. USDA officials cited risk assessment research, feed ban policies, OIE guidelines, and reviewed U.S. beef industry standards and procedures.

USDA went on to present the Thai FDA with information about the recall in the United States to illustrate the manner in which the USDA is managing the situation to minimize risk exposure as well as limit market disruption. The points were:

1. Muscle tissue beef is not known to harbor the infectious agent that causes BSE;
2. The beef imported into Thailand prior to the temporary suspension was not from the so-called index cow or her herd mates;
3. The recall of beef in the United States was a voluntary, Class II recall, of approximately 10,410 pounds of raw beef that may have been exposed to tissues containing the infectious agent that causes BSE.

In addition to information about the recall of beef in the United States, USDA officials offered information about the partial recall undertaken in Japan where only SRM containing products were subject to a government recall. It was underscored that the Japanese government did not recall muscle tissue products not containing SRM.

Thai FDA officials thanked the U.S. side for the attention to detail and effort in explaining the situation surrounding BSE and BSE-related efforts in the United States. An inter-agency committee within FDA will meet to discuss the matter and the points raised during this meeting with USDA will be presented to the committee for its consideration. Reaction from the Thai side is expected in the first weeks of February.

The next presentation on BSE to the RTG will be by USDA Deputy Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs, Dr. Charles Lambert, on January 28, 2004.